**Grade-Level Data Collection: Fourth Grade Team**

1. Discuss where you are as a group. What’s going well? What’s not? What stumbling blocks are you encountering? Etc…

We have finished narrative writing. A stumbling block: district writing rubric does not match narrative or fictional writing. We would like a modified district rubric. Yes, go for it. Will you do this work in coordination with other grade levels? What will you use to support the criteria that lands on the rubric? The kids are writing more than they ever did before. Yes! Some of us feel that book three, essays, is too difficult for 4th graders. Should you consider moving the book to the end of fourth grade? How can you redesign mini lessons to better support your students? We wonder how the daily writing we are doing will help our students write to a prompt on the 4-Sight and PSSA tests. Here is a quote from Lucy, “Test prep is no big deal when writers enter into it having already developed the muscles they need to draw upon. But test prep alone can’t possibly prepare our kids for the hurdles they will be expected to get over. For that, they need to be actively engaged in the writing process, thoroughly and often.” (*A Guide to the Writing Workshop, Grades 3 – 5*, p. 101)We as teachers are becoming more comfortable with the overall program. Students are getting more comfortable sharing their writing with their peers. What do we do with that small % of students who refuse to work independently and will sit for the entire periods, doing nothing while we are conferencing with other students? What are you noticing about them specifically? Do they write better/more at different times?

We would like to give our students more practice with informational and persuasive essays. Sounds like you want to rearrange or create new units of study. Discuss this with your team and make a plan.

We are struggling with fitting the other subject areas into our day. How can our students do well on the Science PSSA if we don’t spend any quality time teaching it? We need to do a better, more efficient job of integrating with science at the forefront of inquiry and motivation in order to prepare students for the PSSA, but most importantly to engage in learning, thinking, and problem solving. We will get there, but it will take time. I do recognize the need, and there are some things in the works already, but one thing at a time. I strongly support continuity of programming and consistent, focused professional development. Right now, we are working on writing, but I see other needs for the future. Thank you for reaffirming this for me.

1. List all the ways you gather assessment information.

Observation, conferences, writing prompts, 4-Sight tests, PSSA tests, writing samples, journal writing, rubrics Great!

1. Why is it important that students gather in a common place to receive their mini lesson?

It makes them feel like a cohesive group with a common goal. By meeting at the same place every day, the students are prepared to start writer’s workshop. Yes, this also creates a sense of community in the classroom

1. What makes assigning writing partners an important piece of the lesson?

The more experienced writers can help the struggling writers. Well, that is true, but not exactly what we are striving to do. Writing partners should be assigned based on students who work well together. This relationship is one that serves to facilitate trust and growth. Students may trust talking to a peer more than the teacher. It is beneficial to get to share everyday with someone even if they don’t get to meet with the teacher. Yes!

1. What things are you finding particularly stressful during conferences with students?

\*Classroom management with the rest of the students (Students who refuse to do what they are supposed to be doing). Focusing on only one issue with a student, by the time we get back to that student too much time has passed.

1. What would you like Carl to specifically address during our session with him on August 4th?

Finding the balance between helping them improve their writing without helping them too much.

1. Think about and discuss how next year will be different and what you will do differently for students since they have had a full year of writer’s workshop.

First month, teach writing sentences and paragraphs. (See below \*) We want to introduce a graphic organizer (i.e. four square). This is okay as an option for students to use if they need an additional tool. In the second month, we would like to focus on writing to a prompt and practicing basic things like establishing a main idea by restating the question and supporting it with details that focus. (See above information regarding test prep.) Then we would like to dive into Writer’s Workshop. (See below) Modify areas of district rubric to be more compatible with the writer’s workshop program. I am interested to hear what you have in mind.

\*You will need to begin the year with the writer’s workshop model. Remember, we are not just teaching writing through writer’s workshop, we are encouraging thinking, problem-solving and independence. Those things are too important to push back to November, so please plan to begin them on the first day of school.

Regarding your plan to teach sentence writing and paragraphs, have you check the standards for what the expectations are for fourth graders?

1. Make some serious decisions about who will represent your grade-level team this summer during the writing institute. Some people have already come forward and committed to attending. Discuss this and share this with the group so everyone is aware and communication throughout the team is on-going.

No fourth grade representation at this year’s summer institute.

1. Complete the following chart to further describe each teacher’s need(s) for support.

*Label with* I*=Immediately,* S*=Soon, or* L*=Later*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Teacher’s Name:** | **Area of Need:** |
| **Ex:** Daphne Snook | Conferencing notes (S) |
| Holly Andretta | Observe teachers from another District that have been using the program. |
| June Hackenberg | Time for 4th Grade to Develop Mentor Texts that we have available here and relate to a rural population. |
| Shannon Woodling | Support for students who have extreme difficulties writing. 3 prong folders-L |
| Jennifer Bilger | Unsure at this time |
| Kathy Troutman | Meeting my student’s specific special education needs within this program |
| Amy Troup-Kline | Opportunity to observe experienced Writer’s Workshop teacher |
| Missy Brauer-Stuck | Time for 4th Grade to Develop Mentor Texts that we have available here and relate to a rural population (inservice time). The district rubric does not match the writing… it requests for details when we teach 3. Pocket folders -L |
| Teresa Baker | Unsure at this time |
| Barb Gregor | Needs a set of manuals, it is difficult to share with other Title 1 teachers |
| All | Difficulties with the lessons in the book. Uncomfortable with lesson delivery. Supporting them with graphic organizers. Flexibility. Supplies for next year, composition books, folders |

1. Work on your grade-level To-Do list, which will help keep your group progressing through needs so that each time your team has an opportunity to work together you know exactly what you will do to keep moving forward.

Become more familiar with the Common Core Standards. Good idea

Use suggestions from Chapter 3 of Carl Anderson’s book regarding conferencing. Good idea

Become more comfortable with Writer’s workshop as a program. This is beginning! Yes! Good things take time.